Supporting the Development of Persistence, One Class at a Time

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Introduce yourself: tell your first name, state, and a brief positive experience from your current job
What is Persistence?

- The desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning year through degree completion (Berger, Lyon 2005)
- Many researchers study retention from the freshman to sophomore year.
Importance of Persistence

- New federal financial aid rules; to receive aid, students must be more successful and persistent
- Without persistence, debt and no credential
- Funding for my institution will partially depend on retention and degree attainment.
Quantitative Research

- Student integration, attachment, effort, and pre-college characteristics (Tinto, Astin, Pascarelli, Terenzini, Barnett, Seidman)
- Remedies largely institutional
- Many assumptions
- Not my students
LCSC is a 4 year college with a “community college function”; > 60% take developmental math; first generation; economic uncertainty
Qualitative Research

- Need for qualitative research that investigates correlations identified by quantitative research.

- “Illuminates the how and why of students’ pathways through the community college...and productive directions to improve those outcomes.” (Bahr, 2011)
Qualitative Research

- Student integration: sense of belonging academically
- Student participation in information networks: social ties that facilitate the transfer of institutional knowledge and procedures (Karp, Hughes, O’Gara: interviews with urban community college students)
Student perception of caring faculty: personal attention, patience, and structure (Rosenbaum, Deil–Amen, Person: 5 urban community colleges combined with longitudinal beginning postsecondary student data)
Student understanding and adherence to the non-academic behaviors, attitudes, and expectations required for success (Karp, Bork, 2012, interviews with students, faculty, and staff at three Virginia community colleges)
Developing Persistence

- Studying national research
- Local research and reflection about what works and why
- Recognizing that a good solution may not scale up to other institutions, other faculty, or other courses: empower individual faculty
Establishing a Social Network

- What should you do if your flight is cancelled after you arrive at the airport?
- If you came alone to this conference, how could you make plans for dinner?
Social Networks

- The classroom on a commuter campus is the primary place for establishing social networks between students
  - Frequent group activities
  - Encourage “safe” study groups
  - Meet students in tutoring center
  - Moderate a class discussion board or Facebook page
Pair/Small Group Discussions

- Low stress limited time activities that build community and address student success issues
  - Tell your best or worst math experience
  - Describe the best place to study on campus
  - Describe how you decide where to sit in a classroom
  - Describe the best way to take notes
Faculty as Information Source

- Campus is a foreign country; new students feel like tourists
  - Classroom posters; bookmarks; maps
  - Daily class outline with campus deadlines; use Blackboard, social media
  - Learn key people; make referrals
  - Include homework questions to identify misunderstandings
Homework Questions

In the first week of a term, you may find that you need to change your schedule and add or drop a class. Explain how to add or drop a class at your college.

If you rely on financial aid to buy textbooks and your financial aid has not yet arrived, what can you do to keep up with the reading and assignments until you receive your financial aid?
Facilitate independent learning

- Daily list in class: today, tomorrow, next week
- Post on-line
- Assess understanding; clarify misunderstandings individually or to the class
Monday November 6

- Read Section 6.4. Pay special attention to Examples 5 and 6.
- Complete on-line homework.
- Complete turn-in homework. Check your answers.
- Add vocabulary from Section 6.5 to index card stack
- Study for skill quiz 15 and retakes for 2 and 14
- Tomorrow: Section 6.6.
- Coming up: Next test is Thursday. Last day to withdraw is Thursday.
8. **−1 points**

I can turn in late homework, if I have a good excuse.
- No
- Yes

9. **−1 points**

If I have an extraordinary circumstance happen that makes it impossible for me to attend class on the day of a test, I should
- Talk to my instructor about it after the next class.
- Bring in a doctor's note the next time I come to class.
- Assume that my instructor will drop this grade at the end.
- Call or e-mail my instructor before 3 pm on the day of the test.
- Go to office hours to tell my instructor.

10. **−1 points**

If I fail a test, I can retake it.
- True.
- False.
Sense of Caring

No one knows who I am or cares if I succeed.

- Group work; opportunity to interact
- Homework: value student opinion
- Group e-mails
- Individual (staggered) e-mails
- Social media
- Early warning to advisors
Why aren’t students ready for college?
- Previously not responsible for their own learning
- Pervasive second chances, retakes, acceptance of late work, extra-credit
- All work done in class
- Academic dishonesty without consequences
Role: College Student

- Ineffective advice
  - College is your main job
  - Make college your first priority
  - Study harder
  - Study 2 hours for every hour in class
  - Show your work
  - Get help
Role: College Student

“Loud and Clear” Expectations

- Explain “syllabus”; intro e-mail
- Anticipate realities with clear policies about work, illness, family
- Consistent
- Targeted homework questions with individual or whole class follow-up
1. + -/1 points

I have read the syllabus.
  ○ No
  ○ Yes

2. + -/1 points

Chapter tests account for this percent of my semester grade.
  ○ 75
  ○ 50
  ○ 55
  ○ 20
  ○ 30
If I'm late to class, after class is over I can make up the problem of the day and get points for attendance.

- Yes
- No

7. **+/1 points**

My instructor's office is located in MLH Room

- 332
- B32
- B10
- 221
- 100
Role: College Student

- Fostering Independent Learning
  - Examples of good work
  - Rubrics
  - Frequent detailed grade reports
  - “Case studies”
  - Meet students in the tutoring center
  - Opportunities for self-assessment and monitoring
Using a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 means “Never do this” and 5 means “I always do this,” identify how often you

1. Come to class.
2. Arrive at class on time.
3. Arrive at class with everything I need.
4. Arrive at class with your homework done.
5. Let your phone distract you in class.
6. Ask a question in class.
Using a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 means “Never do this” and 5 means “I always do this,” identify how often you

1. Turn in your homework assignment.
2. Do additional problems for extra practice.
3. Use flashcards or some other way to learn vocabulary.
4. Work an example in the book, line by line.
5. Read an explanation in the book.
6. Meet with a study group.
7. Rewrite your notes.
Thinking about how you prepared for this test, is there anything that you think that you should have done differently?

Thinking about this class, do you feel like you are in good shape, a little behind, a lot behind, or in danger of not passing?
Role: College Student

- Study skills
  - Connections to College 101 courses
  - Daily home study plans
  - Model using textbook; use text examples to ease note taking
  - Construct practice tests
  - Test reflections
An objective describes what you are supposed to be able to do by the time you complete the work for this section of the textbook.

1. Write down the objectives assigned for this section of the textbook.
2. Look at Practice Problem 1. If you can complete this question correctly, what objective have you learned?
3. Look at the Practice Test for this chapter. What problem on the test assesses whether you have learned this objective?
Monitoring or participating in social networks, texting, surfing the Internet, and using other technology can affect your concentration. You might need to limit multitasking to do effective studying. List the other tasks that you can manage at the same time that you are doing math homework or studying for a math test.

Family members, roommates, or friends can affect your concentration. Describe how you manage to study effectively and still maintain your relationships with family members, roommates, or friends.
In groups of four, discuss when you think it is appropriate to arrive later or leave early from a session at this conference.
Role: College Student

- Appropriate behavior in a foreign country: respect and courtesy
  - Phone messages, e-mail
  - Talking, electronics, language
  - Proactive: frustration, “negative self-talk”
  - Dress, perfume
  - Asking students to leave
Some instructors in college do not admit students who arrive late to class. Others allow late students to enter if they do so quietly. Describe your instructor’s policy about arriving on time to class.

Some college students own a portable computer, MP3 player, tablet, smartphone, cell phone, and/or other electronic device. Describe your instructor’s policy about the use of these electronic devices in class.
If you communicate with an instructor using e-mail, many instructors prefer that you present the information more formally than you would if you were text messaging or using social media such as Twitter. Write an e-mail to your instructor that explains that you are too ill to come to class for a test. Ask what you should do about missing the test. If your college does not have guidelines for writing e-mail, use the format shown below.

To: (Instructor e-mail address)
Subject Line: (include the name of your class and section number or class time)
Salutation: (use the title and name preferred by your instructor)
Body: (write in complete standard English sentences; check your spelling. Do not use smiley faces, other emoticons, or inappropriate language.)
Signature: (use your full name)
About two-thirds of all faculty members employed by public and private colleges. (Chronicle of Higher Ed, Nov. 20, 2011)

- Professional development expectation
- Common “core” assignments; common finals
- Referral lists for on-campus services
- Rubrics, sample graded assignments
- Peer observations
Persistence in the Classroom

- Student information networks
- Faculty as information source
- Highly structured classroom
- Learn the role of college student
- Help students believe that they belong in our world; help students learn the habits and skills that they need to be successful in it.